

Message Text

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R 300030Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8021

INFO ALL AMERICAN CONSULATES IN MX

GUATEMALA

MANAGUA

SAN JOSE

SAN SALVADOR

TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MX

SUBJECT: MONTHLY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS - MAY 1975

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: COMPARED WITH APRIL, MAY WAS A MONTH OF EBBTIDE IN DOMESTIC POLITICS. IN PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS, THE LID WENT BACK ON, ONE POLITICAL FIGURE AFTER ANOTHER DISCOURAGING OPEN CAMPAIGNING BY THE SEVEN CANDIDATES NAMED PUBLICLY LAST MONTH. PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA FINALLY MADE HIS VIEWS KNOWN UNEQUIVOCALLY: PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS SHOULD BE DEFERRED SO THE WORK OF HIS ADMINISTRATION COULD CONTINUE. WHILE STARTLING DEVELOPMENTS WERE LACKING, POLITICAL ACTIVITY DID CONTINUE AS THE PRI BEGAN WORK ON ITS SIX YEAR PLAN, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY GOT A TENTATIVE OAR INTO THE SUCCESSION QUESTION, AND A SPLIT DEVELOPED IN THE OPPOSITION PAN. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THE GOM QUICKLY ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM AND SOUTH VIETNAM'S PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY (PRG) GOVERNMENT AND OTHERWISE REACTED FAVORABLY TO EVENTS IN INDOCHINA. THE SHAH OF IRAN, AND THE PRESIDENT OF SENEGAL CONTINUED THE STREAM OF VISITING VIPS, WITH FEW

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TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO MEXICO APPARENT TO US. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION: AFTER THE TUMULT OF APRIL, MAY WAS RELATIVELY QUIET ON THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION FRONT. IT GRADUALLY BECAME CLEAR THE PRI DID NOT INTEND FOR THE DESTAPAMIENTO (PUBLIC NAMING OF SEVEN CANDIDATES) TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM WHEREBY THE RULING ELITE (HEADED BY THE PRESIDENT) CHOOSES THE NEXT PRESIDENT. THE PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE CANDIDATES INSPIRED BY THE EVENTS OF APRIL SUBSIDED AFTER PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IN EARLY MAY DECLARED THAT AMBITIONS SHOULD BE DEFERRED SO HIS WORK COULD CONTINUE. IN MID-MAY, PRI PRESIDENT REYES HEROLES (THE PRESIDENT'S CHIEF SERVANT IN KEEPING CONTROL OF SUCCESSION-RELATED EVENTS) WENT OFF TO EASTERN EUROPE FOR TEN DAYS.

3 . BUSINESS LEADERS ENTER POLITICAL FRAY; MUCH POLITICAL ATTENTION SHIFTED AWAY FROM THE CANDIDATES THEMSELVES DURING MAY TOWARD A GROUP REGARDED BY MOST PRI PARTISANS AS "OUTSIDERS": THE MEXICAN BUSINESS, BANKING AND INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY. IN AN UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC MOVE, BUSINESS LEADERS PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND TO THE PRESS THEIR OWN PHILOSOPHY AND VIEWS ON THE COURSE OF MEXICAN DEVELOPMENT -- VIEWS DISTINCTLY MORE CONSERVATIVE AND FREE ENTERPRISE-ORIENTED THAN THE STANDARD GOM AND PRI LINE, AND BETRAYING IN PARTICULAR A CONCERN OVER ACCELERATING GROWTH OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR WITHIN THE ECONOMY AND CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE.

4. THE PARTY ESTABLISHMENT PROMPTLY COUNTERATTACKED. PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA THANKED THE BUSINESSMEN FOR THEIR OPINIONS BUT WARNED THAT "THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY, NOT THE VESTED INTERESTS OF MINORITIES," WOULD DETERMINE THE POLICIES OF THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION. HARSHER, MORE SARCISTIC CRITICISM CAME FROM OTHER SENIOR GOM OFFICIALS AND FROM THE PRESS: THE BUSINESSMEN'S IDEAS WERE "OUTMODED IN THE 19TH CENTURY", REPRESENTED AN EFFORT TO "DICTATE THE CANDIDATE AND PLATFORM OF A PARTY TO WHICH THEY DON'T EVEN BELONG," THREATENED THE "MIXED ECONOMY FOUNDATIONS OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION", ETC. AND AT LEAST ONE IMPORTANT BUSINESS GROUP -- THE INDUSTRIAL CHAMBER (HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES) DIS-

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AVOWED THE BUSINESSMEN'S PRONOUNCEMENT. OUR VIEW IS THAT THE BUSINESSMEN WISHED BY THIS MEANS TO GET AN OAR INTO THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION RACE; WHETHER OR NOT THEIR UNUSUALLY OPEN MOVE WILL BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

5. A SPLIT IN PAN: WHEN PAN'S 1970 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, EFRAIN GONZALEZ MORFIN, DEFEATED JOSE ANGEL CON-

CHELLO IN MARCH FOR THE PAN PRESIDENCY, A SHIFT TOWARD THE CENTER BY PAN WAS EVIDENT. PANISTAS OF ALL ILKS ARGUED PER-SUASIVELY, HOWEVER, THAT THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER (AMONG THE POWERLESS) HAD NOT BEEN DIVISIVE. BUT WHEN THE NEW LEADER-SHIP NAMED ONE OF ITS SUPPORTERS TO REPLACE CONCHELLO AS HEAD OF PAN'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND A GROUP SUP-PORTING CONCHELLO PUBLICLY REVEALED ITS SUPPORT FOR A CONCHELLO ALLY AS PAN'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE (CONCHELLO IS INELIGIBLE), THE SPLIT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCEAL. A RANKING PAN OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE PROBLEMS ARE SERIOUS AND SEEMED WORRIED ABOUT PATCHING THINGS UP.

6. THE PRI PREPARES FOR 1976 ELECTIONS: IN MAY THE RULING PRI TOOK ACTION ON TWO FRONTS TO PREPARE FOR THE 1976 ELECTIONS. IN SAN LUIS POTOSI THE PARTY'S POPULAR SECTOR HELD A NATIONAL MEETING TO DISCUSS MEXICO'S MIDDLE CLASSES. THE RHETORIC underscored a basic dilemma: the GOM's reformist course socially and economically has cost middle class (i.e., urban) votes. In the federal district, the PRI's share of the vote dropped from 67 to 59 to 5) percent during 1967-1973, the PAN picking up all the difference. The PRI can't afford further inroads without resorting to blatant electoral fraud; but differences between rural and worker on the one hand and urban interests on the other are gradually becoming greater.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8022

INFO ALL AMERICAN CONSULATES IN MX

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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7. DURING MAY THE PRI GOT TO WORK ON ELABORATING ITS SIX YEAR PLAN FOR THE 1976-82 ADMINISTRATION. IT PROMISES TO BE A MASSIVE DOCUMENT, WITH SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AND WITH LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF COMING TO GRIPS WITH DILEMMA DESCRIBED ABOVE. ONE PRI OFFICIAL WORKING ON IT WAS OPENLY CYNICAL: "POLITICS, NOT SYSTEMATIC PLANNING, DECIDES WHO GETS WHAT IN MEXICO."

8. GOM APPREHENSIVE ABOUT TERRORISM: POLICE ATTRIBUTED A DOUBLE KILLING IN EARLY MAY TO THE 23 OF SEPTEMBER COMMUNIST LEAGUE, BUT MAY WAS OTHERWISE FREE FROM TERRORIST VIOLENCE. NONETHELESS, GOM OFFICIALS REMAINED APPREHENSIVE, HAVING LEARNED OF TERRORIST HOPES TO ASSASSINATE A TOP SECURITY OFFICIAL AND PERHAPS KIDNAP A PROMINENT POLITICAL FIGURE.

9. GOM ESTABLISHES RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM: QUICK TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THE WINNERS, THE GOM ON MAY 19 ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS PRECEDED BY HIGHLY-CONFIDENTIAL

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FAVORABLE GOM REACTION TO EVENTS IN VIETNAM. OFFICIALS FROM ECHEVERRIA DOWN VOICED DSATISFACTION RELATING THE "VICTORY OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST FORCES" TO MEXICO'S EXPERIENCE WITH FOREIGN INTERVENTION. ON MAY 26 , THE GOM ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH SOUTH VIETNAM'S PRG.

10. THE VISITS CONTINUE: THE SHAH OF IRAN AND PRESIDENT SENGHOR OF SENEGAL CONTINUED THE STREAM OF VIPS TO MEXICO. GOM OFFICIALS NOTED THE POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR IRANIAN INVESTMENTS (IN LAS TRUCHAS STEEL COMPLEX, FOR EXAMPLE) BUT THE VISIT PASSED WITHOUT ANY SUCH DEVELOPMENTS. AFTER THE SHAH DEPARTED THE HEAD OF LAS TRUCHAS RIGHTEOUSLY DECLARED THAT NO FOREIGN INVESTMENT WOULD BE ALLOWED IN THAT PROJECT (WHICH SOUNDS LIKE SOUR GRAPES TO US). ECHEVERRIA SAID MEXICO WOULD JOIN OPEC IF INVITED BUT APPPEARED TO RENEGE IN PRIVATE. THE VISIT OF SENEGALESE PRESIDENT SENGHOR WAS INTERESTING DUE TO THE CONTRAST HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS PRESENTED TO THOSE BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, BUT WAS OTHERWISE WITHOUT MUCH SUBSTANCE.

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